

Message Text

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ACTION NEA -13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3198

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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REF: KABUL 580

SUMMARY: GOP OVER PAST MONTH APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN PAINS TO AVOID GIVING OFFENSE TO KABUL BOTH IN BILATERAL ISSUES AND IN PAK DOMESTIC MATTERS OF INTEREST TO AFGHANS. AT SAME TIME, "FORWARD POLICY" ALONG BORDERS IS CONTINUING AND UNRESOLVED BALUCHISTAN ISSUE REMAINS AN IRRITANT, ALTHOUGH THERE IS ONCE AGAIN SPECULATION THAT BHUTTO-NAP COMPROMISE OVER BALUCHISTAN IS IMMINENT. SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL DEALING WITH AFGHAN AFFAIRS EXPRESSED PESSIMISM OVER IMPROVEMENT FOR SHORT TERM IN PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING DECEMBER'S ABORTIVE MISSION TO KABUL OF BHUTTO'S COUSIN AND DEPOSED SIND CHIEF MINISTER MUMTAZ ALI BHUTTO, GOP APPEARS IN SOME INSTANCES TO HAVE GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO AVOID GIVING OFFENSE TO AFGHANS. GOP HAS APPARENTLY DROPPED RESTRICTIONS WHICH PREVENTED AFGHAN NOMADS FROM CROSSING FRONTIER. BHUTTO MADE POINT OF STATING DURING VISIT OF CHINESE MILITARY DELEGATION THAT SINO-PAKISTAN TIES WERE NOT DIRECTED AGAINST ANY OF PAKISTAN'S

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NEIGHBORS. REMARK PRESUMABLY DIRECTED AT AFGHANISTAN AS

WELL AS INDIA. HOWEVER, PAK RESTRAINT MOST EVIDENT IN DOMESTIC POLIIHES. GOP NOT ONLY PERMITTED NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY LEADER WALI KHAN TO TRAVEL TO KABUL, BUT (ASIDE FROM BRIEF, CRITICAL REFERENCE BY LAW MINISTER PIRZADA) TO DATE HAS NOT USED HIS JANUARY 10-20 SORZURN THERE AGAINST HIM POLITICALLY IN PAKISTAN. MOREOVER, GOP AND NORTH WEST FRONTIER GOVERNMENT RECENTLY PERMITTED BY ALL ACCOUNTS TWO FREE (BY PAKISTANI STANDARDS) BY-ELECTIONS IN FRONTIER WHICH WERE WON BY NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY. MOST RECENTLY, NWFP GOVERNMENT HAS RELEASED OVER TWO HUNDRED ANP WORKERS AND PAKHTOON ZALMS MEMBERS PICKED UP LAST OCTOBER IN "CLEAN UP" CAMPAIGN. FOR VARIETY REASONS, GOP POSTPONED SCHEDULED JANUARY 31 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON BALUCHISTAN SITUATION, WHICH WOULD HAVE AGAIN AIRED GOP REPRESSION OF NAP IN THAT PROVINCE ON EVE OF AZIZ AHMED VISIT TO KABUL.

2. ALL, *F COURSE, IS NOT SWEETNESS AND LIGHT IN PAK- AFGHAN AFFAIRS. THERE NO INDICATIONS, PAKS HAVE STOPPED ANY PREVIOUSLY INITIATED ACTIVITIES TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH "FORWARD POLICY" ALONG PAK-AFGHAN FRONTIER. INTERNALLY, BALUCHISTAN CHIEF MINISTER ANNOUNCED JANUARY 23 THAT INTERNED BALUCH LEADERS BIZENJO AND MARRI WOULD SOON BE PUT ON TRIAL AND THAT ONE FORMER NAP PROVINCIAL MINISTER HAD BEEN DESIGNATED "PROCLAIMED OFFENDER". ADDITIONALLY, BHUTTO TOOK SWIPE AT DAUD IN INTERVIEW WITH L'EXPRESS PUBLISHED HERE JANUARY 7. DURING HIS RECENT SPEAKING TOUR OF UPPER SIND, HE ALSO GOT IN A FEW MORE DIGS AT AFGHANS IN COURSE OF CASTIGATING SINDI EXTREMISTS.

3. WHILE CONSIDERATIONS OF AFGHAN SENSIBILITIES MAY HAVE LED, IN PART, TO RELATIVELY RESTRAINED POSTURE BY GOP AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS, PURELY DOMESTIC POLITICAL FACTORS MAY HAVE BEEN OVERRIDING. TALK OF COMPROMISE BETWEEN BHUTTO AND NAP, PERENNIALLY CURRENT, HAS INTENSIFIED DURING PAST TWO MONTHS. BHUTTO HAS LENT ADDITIONAL CREDENCE TO SUCH TALK BY REMARKS IN LAHORE JANUARY 31 THAT HE WOULD ADDRESS BALUCHISTAN SITUATION IN SPEECH AFTER FEBRUARY 12 WHEN HE WOULD CLEARLY INDICATE "THAT NATIONAL OBJECTIVES HAD BEEN ACHIEVED AND THERE HAD BEEN

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NO SETBACK IN HIS EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL CONSOLIDATION". (SEE KARACHI 238 FOR LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN BALUCHISTAN ON POLITICS).

4. IN JANUARY 31 DISCUSSION BETWEEN EMBOFF AND MFA DIRGEN FOR AFGHAN AFFAIRS MANSUR AHMAD, HOWEVER, LATTER WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ANY MEANINGFUL IMPROVEMENT IN SHORT

TERM PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS. IN HIS VIEW, BEST THAT COULD BE HOPED FOR WAS THAT DAUD GOVERNMENT WOULD "COOL IT" AS REGARDS PUSHTUNISTAN HARD LINE. AHMED AND AFGHAN EMBASSY COUNSELOR WHO WAS PRESENT AT SAME SOCIAL FUNCTION, BOTH EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT HQA WOULD SEND RELATIVELY HIGH-RANKING DELEGATE TO ATTEND ISLAMIC SUMMIT, WITH COUNSELLOR SPECULATING THAT AFGHAN AMBASSADOR TO INDIA PAZHWAK OR PERHAPS MINISTER MAJID MIGHT BE SELECTED.

5. IN SEPARATE JANUARY 31 CONVERSATION WITH MANSUR AHMED, POL COUNSELOR NOTED THAT PAKS HAD PUBLICLY DESCRIBED PURPOSE OF AZIZ AHMED VISIT AS DELIVERY OF INVITATION TO LAHORE SUMMIT, YET GOA HAD GONE AHEAD AND ANNOUNCED SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE HIS ARRIVAL THAT THEY HAD DECIDED TO ATTEND. MANSUR AHMED SAID THIS APPARENT ANOMALY RESULTED FROM RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT AND GOP AS LAHORE SUMMIT HOST. INVITATIONS TO SUMMIT ITSELF ARE ISSUED BY SECRETARIAT, HE SAID, AND GO AUTOMATICALLY TO ALL ISLAMIC CONFERENCE MEMBERS. INVITATION BEING TRANSMITTED BY AZIZ AHMED IS TO BE GUEST OF GOP WHILE ATTENDING SUMMIT AND TO "PARTAKE OF OUR HOSPITALITY".

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